

City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee
March 9, 2006 Meeting
Minutes taken by Rob Gogan

Members Attending: Rob Gogan, Harvard University; Cornelia Herzfeld, Cambridge resident; Paul Schlaver, Cambridge Consumers Council; Judy Nathans, Cambridge resident; Adam Mitchell, Save That Stuff

Guests Attending: Rosalie Anders, Environmental & Transportation Division in Community Development; Kelly Dunn, Recycling Program Manager; David Johnston, Cambridge Housing Authority; Randi Mail, Recycling Director

Bottled Water in City Buildings

Paul Lyle, DPW Building Superintendent, was invited to attend our meeting today but could not due to illness. Randi had detailed a phone conversation with him and reported what she learned. Paul began a trial contract with a water filtration service for the buildings with A-Certi-Cure in May 2005. Paul was aware that tap water was subject to more safeguards than bottled water, since bottlers legally don't have to test for contaminants.

Cost is \$121 per month for four units. Although Cambridge municipal water is state-of-the-art, filters can remove all toxins and contaminants. Paul told a story of having seen a piece of toilet tissue sealed in a Poland Springs water bubbler. DPW is happy with the taste and quality of the filtered water. Paul's goal is to test this in more buildings once the yearlong trial is complete before advocating the program in all city buildings.

Rosalie said that at the City Annex building (344 Broadway), water bubblers provide convenience because of locations of the pipes so that we wouldn't have to walk all the way to the rest rooms. Paul Schlaver mentioned that the Lombardi building (831 Mass) has many coffee makers which occupants use for hot water.

The discussion turned to one of the City's main operations: delivering clean water, with a cutting-edge, expensive facility. Members felt that with this extensive system in place, city employees should drink city water. Many benefits to using filtered tap water were discussed including reduced truck pollution and associated climate change, waste reduction, air quality, traffic calming, and so forth.

Rob suggested members brainstorm on why employees want to use water bubblers. There may be health, convenience, and esthetics issues involved. Judy pointed out that libraries also have bubblers. Paul felt that employees would accept

filtered water if it's in the same location and quality and health benefits are good.

Rob offered to write a letter to the Council expressing the RAC's interest in promoting filtered water instead of bottled water. Rosalie and Paul offered to take informal surveys in their buildings as to drinking water issues.

Committee listed a few questions including whether the water sits in the machine and what maintenance includes. Answers are:
The treated water flows into the chilled reservoir, which holds 3/4 of a gallon and (1) quart of room temperature water. The ratio is one to one. Draw 8 oz. and 8 oz. is immediately replaced with freshly treated water. Maintenance includes all filters, cost of same, all labor, and service. All systems are serviced automatically depending on total water consumption.

Mass DEP Funds Compost Proposal

Randi announced receipt of a \$35,000 2-year DEP grant to Cambridge. Working with the City's hauler for business recycling, Save That Stuff, this project will offer organics collection services to Cambridge businesses and the schools participating in the CitySprouts program. The grant money will be used to hire a firm/individual to recruit and train business customers, and for publicity. In addition to Save That Stuff and CitySprouts, other project supporters include the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce and the School Department.

Project partners are very excited about this project as MassDEP looks at a future food waste ban and increasing the composting infrastructure; and the City continues to look at its Climate Protection Plan goals. Harvard and MIT have composted for years, but can divert more organic waste. But to start up another collection route, a hauler needs a full load. MassDEP will provide technical assistance in identifying permitted organics processing facilities and alternatives and

procedures in the event the hauler cannot achieve optimal density at the onset. Potential customers have been broken into 3 categories. Category 1 includes universities, supermarkets, hotels, and industrial food processors. Category 2 includes cafeterias at assisted living homes and large corporate offices, big restaurants and hospitals. Category 3 includes schools, coffee shops and florists.

Cambridge will issue an RFP in April to identify a firm/individual to help market and implement the project. Save That Stuff is developing publicity materials that address cost (same or less than trash), how recycling organics will clean up the trash and reduce rodent issues associated with poor storage of waste. Save That Stuff is looking at processing facilities with MassDEP and the best collection methods to make it easy and clean for the customer and the City. Soon after the Cambridge City Council appropriates the grant, the RFP will be issued.

Randi added that 64 large and medium size supermarkets in MA have been composting through an EPA grant that MassDEP received. A voluntary certification project was announced at the March 1st 6th Annual Organics Summit to provide waste ban regulatory relief for participants. For more info visit www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/supermkt.htm.

New Trash Collection Rules Start April 3rd

Randi shared the informational postcard that was mailed Citywide to all households that announced the new changes to the Refuse & Litter ordinance:

- Trash placed at the curb the night before collection must be in rodent-resistant barrels with tight-fitting lids, no earlier than 6pm.
- Trash in plastic bags can only be placed at the curb on the day of collection, no later than 7am. Only heavy-duty plastic bags will be collected.

Public education about the changes so far:

- Postcard mailed to ~45,000 households
- Weekly city newsletter (PIO/[E-line](#))
- Lawn sign at City Hall and rotated around City
- Cable channel
- Mailing of poster and invite for group meeting to 200 clergy and community groups

- Postcards sent home with students
- Posters at all libraries and we are working on businesses on different main drags
- Presentations at community police meetings, to Cambridge Housing Authority property managers, large property owners

Tom Riordan, the new Compliance Officer started February 27th. Tom worked as Curbside Enforcement Inspector for the City of Worcester responsible for enforcing City ordinances primarily those with regard to solid waste issuing tickets to repeat offenders. His work experience spans housing inspections, enforcement of legal notices in Worcester Housing Court, and pursuing legal action against non-compliances. He is a graduate of Northeastern University and will be a valuable addition to the DPW team. Tom will work closely with Charlie McIsaac from Inspectional Services on rodent control.

Multi-bag Recycling Pilot Update

Members asked about the new pilot to be rolled out in large apartment buildings, specifically Washington Elms. Randi reported that this project is on hold until CHA works out other recycling set out issues: set-out time and contamination. David said that senior management needs to be on board and that they need to kick-start more dialogue with residents. Kelly reported that she is looking at pilots at several other buildings.

250 [bags](#) were purchased, but they are interested in a custom order bag with 2 large compartments to provide ample space for papers and containers. Kelly target condominiums and will monitor participation level before, during and after door-hanger bag distribution. We want to find buildings that can improve with bags. Below 10 lbs per household per week is graded "C," between 10-20 lbs per week is graded "B," and over 20 is "A." Condos now comprise an estimated 32% of the City's large apartment buildings. Kelly will give out the bags in person to participating buildings along with easy flyers with big pictures of what's acceptable like the ones now on the [website](#).

Meeting adjourned at 9:30